DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 364 891 CS 214 127

AUTHOR Alexander, Jayne
TITLE A Multiculturally-Responsive Tenth Grade English Curriculum Nurtures an Appreciation for Individual Differences by Immersing Students in the Lives of Others.
PUB DATE 93
NOTE 71p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Cultural Awareness; Cultural Differences; Curriculum Development; *English Instruction; Grade 10; High Schools; *High School Students; *Multicultural Education
IDENTIFIERS *Cultural Sensitivity

ABSTRACT

The goal of a practicum was that high school students in non-academic 10th grade English classes would develop an understanding of and appreciation for cultural differences. The English teacher challenged herself, her peers, her students, and the general school population (a regional high school in a growing community in the northeastern United States) to become more knowledgeable and appreciative of many cultures by expanding her own knowledge of ethnic groups; creating a faculty reading club; developing a curriculum that responsibly presented ethnic groups in a relevant format; designing activities that provided opportunities for interaction with other cultural groups and for action on behalf of others; and providing programs for the larger student population. Expected outcomes were reached. Non-academic tenth-grade students did develop an understanding and appreciation for cultural differences. By participating in both school and class programs, students become more involved with and knowledgeable of the values and experiences of those whose roots were different from their own. In addition, they demonstrated a willingness and intention to respond to the crises of a culturally diverse group outside of their immediate circle of friends. (Forty-two references, a sample assessment instrument for cultural awareness, the volunteerism interview questions, and book selection criteria are attached.) (Author/RS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 364 891

A Multiculturally-Responsive Tenth Grade English Curriculum Nurtures an Appreciation for Individual Differences by Immersing Students in the Lives of Others

by

Jayne Alexander

Cluster 43

A Practicum II Report presented to the
Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY
1993

CS 214127

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
J. Alexander

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Barbara L. Tremblay

Barbara Tremblay
Keene High School Administrator
Keene, NH

May 21, 1993

This practicum report was submitted by Jayne Alexander under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

8-10-93
Date of final Approval of report

Georgianna Lowen
Georgianna Lowen, Ed.D., Adviser

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to acknowledge the following people for their individual and collective appreciation of individual voice: my adviser, Dr. Georgianna Lowen; my verifier, Barabara Tremblay; my students; my colleagues, Kelly Budd and Deborah Swartout; and my children, Tanya and Shawn.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENT		iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS		iv
ABSTRACT		vi
Chapter		
I	INTRODUCTION	1
	Description of Work Setting and community	1
	Writer's Work Setting and Role	3
II	STUDY OF THE PROBLEM	5
	Problem Description	5
	Problem Documentation	5
	Causative Analysis	7
	Relationship of the Problem to the Literature	9
III	ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	15
	Goals and Expectations	15
	Expected Outcomes and Evaluation	15
	Instruments	16

IV SOLUTION STRATEGY 18

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions 18
Description of Selected Solution ... 26
Report of Action Taken 27

V RESULTS, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND DISSEMINATION 40

Results 40
Discussion 44
Dissemination 55

REFERENCES 57

Appendices

A SAMPLE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR CULTURAL AWARENESS 62
B VOLUNTEERISM INTERVIEW 65
C BOOK SELECTION CRITERIA 67

ABSTRACT

A Multiculturally-Responsive Tenth Grade English Curriculum Nurtures an Appreciation for Individual Differences. Alexander, Jayne., 1993: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Descriptors /High School Sophomore/English Curriculum/Multicultural Education/Telecommunications

High school students in non-academic tenth grade English classes lacked an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural differences. When confronted with the crises of characters in literature and figures in the news who were removed from the students' immediate context, these young people were quick to turn their heads in a noncommittal direction. The goal of the writer was that high school students in non-academic tenth grade English classes would develop an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural differences.

The writer challenged herself, her peers, her students, and the general school population to become more knowledgeable and appreciative of many cultures by expanding her own knowledge of ethnic groups, creating a faculty reading club, developing a curriculum that responsibly represented ethnic groups in a relevant format, designing activities that provided opportunities for interaction with other cultural groups and for action on behalf of others, and providing programs for the larger student population.

The writer has determined that expected outcomes were reached. Non-academic tenth grade students did develop an understanding and appreciation for cultural differences. By participating in both school and class programs, students became more involved with and knowledgeable of the values and experiences of those whose roots were different from their own. In addition, they demonstrated a willingness and intention to respond to the crises of a culturally diverse group outside of their immediate circle of friends.

****

As a student in the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies, I do give permission to Nova University to distribute copies of this practicum report on request from interested individuals. It is my understanding that Nova University will not charge for this dissemination except to cover the costs of microfiching, handling, and mailing of the materials.

May 20, 1993 Jayne Alexander

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The work setting for the writer is a regional high school in a growing community in the Northeast. Like many other communities, this one also struggles with growing pains. No longer is it an idyllic village of uncomplicated, rural folk who rely on the land for their subsistence. The village has grown into a city; its farm land has been paved for industrial development while its country homes have been remodeled for multi-family dwelling.

Impacted by the area's economic shift, this community's growing population of 22,154 is no longer homogeneous, stable, or self sufficient. Of this total population approximately 55 are Asian, 10 are Native American, 34 are Hispanic, and 38 are Black (Non-Hispanic). Because this community consistently boasts the lowest unemployment rate in the state, many individuals migrate here to find work and leave when the job market in their field becomes unstable. There are only two full-time farms left in the area. This city is now officially described as industrial, housing 55 factories and 4 industrial parks. It also has become the retail and social service center for more than 100,000 people residing within a 20 square mile radius. These social services are an integral part of the lives of many; the median household income is $16,462, leaving 10.2% of the population to survive below the poverty level. Hence, the needs and values of this population are alive and emergent, impacting its institutions by calling for their reevaluation and redefinition.

Description of the Work Setting

The high school serving this population houses 1,352 students, 654 males and 698 females, in grades nine to twelve. Presently attending the high school are five Native Americans, eight Asians, fourteen Hispanics, and six Black, Non-Hispanics. A significant portion (15%) of the student population is tuitioned (at a rate of $4,450 per student) to this high school by five, smaller outlying towns that have generally, by their geographical isolation, kept their rural homogeneity. In other words, these students come to this community to attend school, to shop, and to work; but their value system remains firmly entrenched in their own community.

Students at this school choose from over 250 academic and vocational offerings. In major academic disciplines, such as English, students are tracked in a sophisticated leveling system: one (honors), two (college preparatory), three (general), four (below sixth grade reading skills), remedial (special education), and collaborative (learning disabled). Presently 8 percent of the student population leaves school before graduation requirements are met; 65 percent pursue post-secondary education.

The school is staffed by 110 full-time faculty members, yielding an average ratio of one teacher to sixteen students. The particular target group for this project consists of two sections of level three, tenth grade English classes, having 22 and 21 students in each group. In these two sections of English class the gender split is unbalanced; females outnumber males three to two. The term "level three general English" is misleading. Students are tracked in this level for various reasons: weak reading and/or writing skills, unstable home life, poor motivation, demanding part time employment. What most often separates level three students from level two students in this high school is the students' unwillingness or inability to work independently to complete homework. Their placement has often little to do with their intellectual ability. If their skills are poor, it is

because they generally have spent less time on school work than level II students have because they have had no model or impetus to prioritize school achievement. What these students generally have in common is membership in the same socio-economic class.

All students in these classes are caucasian; many have never had an occasion to or are unaware that they have ever communicated with a non-white individual. Student ethnicity is rarely identified; most have no connection to a religious or ethnic group and are fairly narrow in their understanding of either type of affiliation.

Students in this group have no geographical focus; 28 students are from outlying towns. Hence, these students usually do not enter high school with solidified group dynamics and predetermined expectations of one another. They present themselves as 43 individuals, in search of the security of a supportive peer group.

Writer's Work Setting

The writer is the English teacher of this target group. She is one of 110 full-time faculty persons in a department of 14 teaching professionals. She has been an educator for 21 years, 15 of which represent teaching experience at the high school level in the discipline of English, the past seven years at this particular high school. With the exception of two teachers, all members of this English department have more than eight years of teaching experience; many have spent their entire professional careers at this high school. Of the 14 department members nine hold advanced degrees. The writer is one of only three to have completed post baccalaureate study within the past three to five years.

The English Department faculty is, in itself, homogeneous in race, educational background, teaching experience, and geographical roots. All members are caucasians; only 2 of 14 have fewer than eight years teaching

experience; no one has had experience teaching a culturally diverse student population. All but these same two, previously mentioned, completed their teacher trainir g more than twenty years ago.

Writer's Role

The writer completed a master of arts degree for teachers of English in 1989 and is presently enrolled in a doctoral program of child and youth studies. Academic course work continues to challenge and refresh the writer who often feels frustrated by the sedentary outlook and unresponsive nature of peers settled into seemingly fixed patterns and roles, defined and adopted more than twenty years ago.

Confronted by the shifting demographics of the community, the country, and the projected work force coupled with pervasive violence in our streets and the insidious national trend toward indifference, the writer is compelled to confront her students with the nation's cultural diversity. To interpret this condition as an asset, not a liability, to these evolving citizens and to positively impact their lives with the richness of ethnicity becomes the conviction of the writer.

Previous attempts by the writer to expose students to ethnic literature were haphazard; evaluation was informal; and such efforts were only casually acknowledged by department members. Armed with a well researched and carefully designed comprehensive plan to heighten cultural awareness, the writer is prepared to confront the stereotypes and fears harbored by faculty and students and implement a program designed to reach not only the school but also its larger geographical community.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

High school students in non-academic tenth grade English classes lacked an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural differences. When confronted with the crises of characters in literature and figures in the news who seem removed from the students' immediate context, these young people were quick to turn their heads in a noncommittal direction. They appeared reluctant to assume another point of view and were candidly disinterested, lacking any genuine concern for the voices of other human beings, both real and fictional. A common response was "different is wrong," when, in fact, students demonstrated little understanding of cultures other than those of their own homogeneous circle of friends. To curricular content and activities focusing on ethnically divergent groups, students postured a bored tolerance that reeked of mere obedience. They claimed they were unable "to get into it." "And anyway," they'd charge, "what does this have to do with us?" Their concept of "us" was clearly defined to include only their immediate peer group which was mandated by the community's socioeconomic class system. It was generally only to this group that these students demonstrated a social conscience. To summarize, these students were indifferent to the ethnic experience.

Problem Documentation

Evidence of this problem was documented by questionnaires, observations, journal entries, interviews, and student work.

Despite the fact that during the 1980's the United States became home to the largest number of immigrants in its history, students in this setting

still operated under the notion that to be American was to ascribe to a narrow set of values held by most white middle class New Englanders. Students reflected these attitudes in their response to a questionnaire (see Appendix A) administered to them by the writer. In these questionnaires completed by 44 tenth grade (non-academic tracked) students 39 indicated they were unaware of their own ethnic roots, 37 held no knowledge of any ethnic group beyond superficial stereotypes, only 10 knew someone from another ethnic group, only 15 thought it was or would be enriching to know someone from another cultural group, and only 5 remembered a character in literature whose ethnicity was other than their own.

In classroom activities 36 of the 44 students had been observed by the writer and three social studies teachers on 5 different occasions to have responded "indifferently" on a leichert scale (ranging from "have concrete plans to respond" to "prejudiced response") to the crises of persons in the media and in literature. Their repeated rationale for apathy was that they had no responsibility for the well being of these individuals because they did not know them. It was someone else's job to help. During discussion students also reported that excessive media coverage numbed them by subconsciously tricking them into believing that none of what they viewed was real. When pressed further concerning their seemingly indifferent response, many students reported they were emotionally moved but felt helpless and generally out of control of any event beyond their immediate context, often perceiving even themselves as mere victims of their own existence.

The writer's journal recorded a detached student response to literature authored by and/or focused on another cultural group. Students demonstrated difficulty in getting involved in these stories. They often appeared confused by a character's initiative or lack of initiative and found the inherent values senseless. This led to an invalidation of the character's disappointments, challenges, and successes. Consequently, the students did not invest themselves in the characters and often did not contemplate the

supplemental learning activities, seeing little merit in them.

38 of 44 students interviewed by the writer and a guidance counselor (see Appendix B) expressed puzzlement over the term "volunteerism," and only 3 indicated that they had reached out to someone outside their own socioeconomic class. Those who had volunteered their time for a cause other than their own had done so through church groups. The remainder considered it uncool or reserved for the perceived elite who belong to a small group of student volunteers at the school. The county director of volunteers reported that 5% of students at this high school volunteer compared to county and national averages of 11% and 13.4 % respectively. Student work prepared by these 44 students and evaluated by one social studies teacher indicated that 40 of the 44 students' multicultural awareness was below the grade of "C" (78-80 points out of 100 points). Their knowledge of geography was particularly deficient once they were asked to move out of their own state, and many of their ideas of ethnic traditions were based on videos they had watched. Often they knew of cultural customs but did not know the historic basis for them and consequently had little respect for them.

Causative Analysis

It was the writer's belief that there were three major causes for the stated problem. These students did not understand or appreciate their own cultural affiliation. They viewed themselves as Americans, not as Americans with a particular genealogical history. Their values were taken for granted, rarely identified; studied; or compared to those of others. Many led lives of survival; family cohesiveness and tradition had been compromised to accommodate financial need, divorce, and family dysfunction. For many of these students the family unit no longer provided the nucleus of their lives.

Secondly, these students had limited experience with people outside their immediate geography, which would include home; place of employment; and school, all of which were predominantly homogeneous in their ethnicity. In reality, non-white students went unnoticed as they faded into the predominantly white school population. Rarely did they assert their identity in an effort to homogenize, to be accepted. Except for the Asian students (whose families were church sponsored) these non-white students' parents were all white. They were adopted or foster parented. Outside of school they generally melted into the community's predominantly white population. This community is proud of its heritage and regularly celebrates its traditions to preserve its values. Students are emphatically indoctrinated into their regional legacy but were rarely provided with community sponsored activities that venture outside of the familiar domain.

The literature selections taught in this course were not multiculturally representative in setting, characterization, or authorship. Although there was a scant multicultural representation, it was always presented through the eyes of a white, male writer whose experience was only one of observer, not participant. Missing was an honesty that was difficult to articulate but easy to perceive. Poetry selections provided the only multicultural authorship, three male Black poets and one Native American male poet. One short story depicted the life of a Mexican cowboy, but there was nothing Mexican about the story. Instead, the character was an Americanized cowboy. There were no drama or biographical selections depicting the ethnic experience. One novel developed the plot around the life of a poor black girl in the 60's in New York City, but the text served only to evoke pity from the reader. This may have been due to the author's lack of genuine experience. Hence, the curricular selections provided little opportunity for positive multi-ethnic reading experiences.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

A review of the literature documents that multicultural awareness and appreciation is a national educational concern shared by sociologists and educators.

Banks (1991/1992) recognizes the importance of multicultural education in a society as ethnically diverse as the United States. He asserts: "An important factor that limits human freedom in a pluralistic society is the cultural encapsulation into which all individuals are socialized" (p. 32). He explains that the curriculum should encourage and assist students to understand the values, beliefs, and stereotypes associated with their particular family and community affiliation. He cautions that the curriculum does not serve its target audience responsibly or fairly if it constructs cultural stone walls that enforce boundaries among individuals. Rather, individuals should be freed from their ethnic confines, encouraged to develop an appreciation for diversity, and challenged to act as responsible, informed, and fair minded citizens. Banks challenges educators to address discrimination that contradicts the nation's pledge to uphold equality and justice for all. He notes this term "all" is often the object of distortion by those who advocate a white, male European canon when, in fact, the 1990 Census (cited by Banks) reports that one of every four United States citizens is a person of color. In summary, Banks challenges educators to respond to the "demographic imperative" (p. 33) by expanding the curriculum to more fairly represent the nation's population. He posits that such an enriched curriculum would inspire and nurture a cohesive, creative citizenry.

Other literature provides evidence that nation wide students lack an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural differences. Wigginton (1991/1992) reports that native Appalachian students rarely hold more than a superficial and stereotypical understanding of their own culture. "The fact that students are *of* a culture does not automatically mean that they will know very much about that culture or have more than superficial

notions about its history or its worth" (p. 60). In reality Wigginton observes that his students do not even know they are Appalachian. Wigginton's overriding concern is that these students who do not understand their cultural affiliation are also unaware of the driving forces of much of their behavior and many of their attitudes and are consequently insensitive to their own evolution.

Gross and Juefei (1991/1992) describe unsuccessful efforts to spark student interest in assembly programs designed to acquaint students with Asian cultures. Asia just seemed too remote to both teachers and students. Their basic understanding was so limited that what guests had to share skipped over what students and teachers really wanted to know, much of which might seem simplistic, such as: "Is the school day for Chinese kids the same as ours?" However, their very questions identify the students' and teachers' need to know these people as human beings first.

Ozturk (1991/1992) describes students at a Vermont high school as being "culture-bound" because they are unable or reluctant to take on a point of view apart from their own cultural perspective. Ozturk writes: "To be culture-bound is to define situations from the perspective of the norms of our own culture, assuming that our ways of interaction are universal" (p. 79). Ozturk also explains that students provided with opportunities of cross-cultural exchange do not automatically understand and respect one another. Without prior information and practice in detecting cultural patterns and comparing them to the culture's values, students do not fully understand or appreciate another cultural view.

Studies conducted by Coles (1986) indicate that by the time a child has learned to walk she has learned (if taught) to keep her distance from the "other kind." At a very young age the young learn to distinguish others according to their race or social class. Coles notes that most adults do not give young children credit for what they know and consequently give them little opportunity to discuss what they observe and perceive. In many cases, he notes, children are subtly taught that matters of race and class are

embarrassing and inappropriate topics for verbalization. Children, generally, then, perpetuate the attitudes of separation and stratification they observe.

The literature reveals several causes for the identified problem. From his studies Maslow (1968) deduces that humans whose basic needs for life are not met are impeded in their quest to self actualize. Without a safe, secure home; affiliation with and affection from peers; respect from others; and respect for one's self, the individual is unable to emerge. Maslow notes that the individual whose personal development is stunted is usually unable and unwilling to reach past himself to understand, respond to, or address the needs of others.

DeLeon (Bullard, 1991/1992), a Spanish teacher at Miami Lakes Senior High School, observes that students often do not see beyond differences of appearance and language, the two most powerful criteria by which they choose friends. In his inner city school where 60% of the students are Hispanic; 30% are Black; and 10% are Caucasian, there is considerable racial tension. Anxious students cling to peers for support; they find comfort and security in their homogeneity. Difference translates to fear in this setting; difference is defined by language and dress.

Bullard (1991/1992) reports that students benefit little from teacher-centered lectures (most frequently used to instruct students about other cultures) and learn to "see with the heart" only through experience with other ethnic groups (p. 41). His school's multicultural course is appropriately called "Inhabiting Other Lives." Without establishing common grounds through experience, Bullard explains that students only acquire knowledge but not understanding or appreciation.

Austin (1980) prefaces cultural studies with a mini unit called "Identity" because students are usually inept at understanding another culture when they do not understand their own. The unit is designed to assist students in identifying their own values and their group's values to determine to what extent these values govern their daily lives, especially

their dealings with and attitudes toward others. Austin reports that students need to understand why they value some behaviors and not others in order to understand how other cultures arrive at their views and habits. Without this knowledge, she notes, students are unable to value or appreciate other cultures.

Shapiro (1982) reports that teachers, most of whom were educated in the midst of the "melting pot" philosophy, are untrained, unaware, and inexperienced in selecting and teaching multicultural literature. She also notes that limited budgets and pressure to teach the "basics" (an unsympathetic, political shift that places national and ethnic affiliation at odds with one another) also hinder the teacher's efforts to pluralize the study of literature.

Polakow-Suransky and Ulaby (1990) note that students are often frustrated by a school structure that "disempowers and alienates" (p. 602) them so that they turn further inward and deny what transpires around them. They report that most students never deal with administrators for other than disciplinary measures. Most never participate in any decision making processes and have no channel for expressing frustrations or effecting change. The consequence is a defeated student body that denies what it feels and sees happening around them. To the less astute observer these students are inaccurately labeled apathetic.

Stover (1991) reminds teachers that students who are not exposed to literature that voices an array of experiences and voices have difficulty assuming diverse perspectives and often view the task as an irrelevant and unwarranted chore. Through the reading and study of multi-cultural literature the author notes that students are given the opportunity to experience life from another perspective. In other words, she points out, literature provides a valid context for multi-cultural understanding.

Weinstein (1992) attributes the insensitivity and indifference a student population often exhibits toward minority groups to its homogeneous community and school population. In a community of predominantly

white, middle class families, students function in an environment that does not provide them with ethnically diverse experiences. Rarely do they personally come in contact with persons of another race or culture. The consequence, Weinstein notes, is that these students are unappreciative of cultural differences and unprepared to work with a racially and culturally diverse population.

Patterson (1982) postulates that teachers often have their own unidentified prejudices that not only hinder their selection of materials but also discredit their presentation of it. Patterson calls on teachers to examine and confront their own racial biases before they engage in multicultural instruction. She poses three questions to facilitate such an examination: "What are the biases which I have toward any ethnic or racial group? What is the source of my bias? What can I do to overcome my biases? " (p. 47) As a result of her own experience Patterson finds that this process provides important information for the teacher in addition to fostering self awareness and personal growth. She also provides a list (see Appendix C) of questions to ask when selecting educational materials for classroom use. These criteria are designed to assist teachers in making unbiased choices.

According to Pool and Iwao (1981) the depiction of violence on American television desensitizes the population to human suffering by presenting it out of context in a sealed, sensationalized vacuum. Sensationalistic violence without suffering (the type that arouses shameful cheering) has deleterious effects on the viewer; violence surrounded by real suffering arouses sympathy and distress in the viewer and teaches an appreciation for human suffering. American television neglects to show suffering in 85% of its coverage (Pool & Iwao, 1981). Young people are inadvertently being taught indifference.

Smagorinsky (1990) reminds educators that it is their responsibility to challenge, guide, and support students toward a sociocentric view because their natural inclination is to remain within the comforts of their

egocentricity. When provided with developmentally appropriate learning experiences, high school students will move from self-centered adolescents to responsible, global citizens. However, Smagorinsky cautions, if literature selections do not provide students with the opportunity to explore their own self in concrete; personal terms, they will unconsciously stall their development and seem unable and unwilling to be concerned with the larger society.

Abalos (1989) reasons that students lack an appreciation for their own and other's ethnicity because most school curricula have not allowed the stories of people of color to be told. In stories, Abalos contends, characters come to life. Although their custom and values may be alien to the reader, these are secondary in importance when compared to the character's joy and suffering. In other words, the reader invests in the story's characters as he would in real people. By not providing students with opportunities to humanize and personalize people of color through their stories, schools perpetuate indifference and disrespect.

In summary, the literature reports that students and faculty need more exposure to culturally diverse people. Their identified lack of understanding and appreciation is directly tied to their lack of personal experience with and knowledge of culturally diverse people.

CHAPTER III
ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum.

The goal of the writer is that high school students in non-academic English classes will have an understanding of and an appreciation for cultural differences. In order to realize this goal students will expand their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and subsequently respond to the crises of others with compassion and initiative. Practically speaking, students will become personally involved in the lives of a multiculturally diverse population in their community and school experience.

Expected Outcomes

1. In questionnaires, completed at the end of the implementation period by 44 tenth grade (non-academic) tracked students, 10 will indicate they are unaware of their own ethnic roots, 10 will hold no knowledge of any ethnic group beyond superficial stereotypes, 30 will know someone from another ethnic group, 25 will think it is enriching to know someone from another cultural group, and 34 will remember a character in literature whose ethnicity is other than their own.

2. In classroom activities 34 of the 44 students will be observed by the writer and three social studies teachers on 5 different occasions to respond on a leichert scale to "having concrete plans to respond" to the

crises of persons in the media and in literature.

3. The writer's journal will record genuine class interest in literature which is authored by and/or focused on another cultural group.

4. 30 of 44 students interviewed by the writer and a guidance counselor will be familiar with community service projects and 25 will indicate they have made an effort to participate at some level.

Measurement of Outcomes

Following the implementation period, the questionaire (see Appendix A) designed to measure cultural awareness and appreciation in these tenth grade students was distributed to them during English class . Students were urged by the writer to respond honestly and anonymously. Because students were regularly concerned with their grades, the writer assured students that their responses would have no connection to their grade or the amount of work the teacher would expect of them in the future. Instead, she explained, she would reward them for honest responses. Prior to completing the form, the teacher facilitated a discussion designed to solidify the students' common understanding of the following terms: ethnic, culture, and stereotype. All questions were worded to allow students to provide additional information on the question's topic and to respond in their words, not those of the writer. While students were independently answering the questions, the teacher provided any assistance requested by them in interpreting questions or composing responses. Following the questionaire, the writer encouraged students to discuss, compare, and analyze their responses in small groups. Each group presented its results to the class for consideration.

The three social studies teachers who assisted the writer in a measurement of student intentions toward human crises observed students during discussions that followed a presentation of current events that the writer believed should evoke student response. The faculty observers did not only consider the students' responses during discussion but their physical response to the presentation of the event itself. All presentations included both written and spoken words and visual depictions.

When possible, during class, the writer jotted brief reminders in her journal; and following each class, the writer added to the data collected during the class period. During her planning period (at the end of the day) the writer transcribed the hasty notes into detailed accounts that later provided complete records for future analysis.

Students were interviewed (see Appendix B) by a counselor who provided the writer with an additional, more objective source of measurement. The interview was oral. Students were encouraged to elaborate on their responses which were recorded by the counselor. This helped students who were inhibited by the task of writing their responses. Keeping in mind the purpose of the interview -- to determine the student's knowledge of volunteer programs in the community and in school, the student's feelings about volunteering, and the student's actual volunteer experience -- the counselor probed to determine each student's understanding of the concept volunteerism and his opinions regarding its value. It was important that the interviewer had strong communication and interpersonal skills to exact the most honest response from the respondents. She trained in these areas and also had the reputation among students for being amiable and trustworthy.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Tenth grade students in the writer's English classes were unresponsive to course work that dealt with an ethnic experience. Consequently, they remained trapped in a vacuum of white middle class values. Unbeknownst to them, they clung to an invalid concept of what it is to be American. Professionals in education, sociology, and psychology suggest a variety of approaches to address and remediate the problem of multicultural indifference.

Prophet (O'Neil, 1991/1992) and Adams, Pardo, and Schniedewind (1991/1992) recognize the need to educate and sensitize teachers to multi ethnic and racial experiences and have developed and implemented programs to effect sound multicultural awareness and appreciation in educators. In response to the non-European ethnic illiteracy of his school's staff, Prophet developed and implemented the Portland Plan, noted for its "baseline essays." These baseline essays include the history of six geocultural groups: Asians, Hispanics, American Indians, Pacific Islanders, Africans, and European Americans. In particular they highlight the contributions made by each group to social studies, science, mathematics, language arts, art, and music. The prevailing theme of the essays is that all geocultural groups deserve respect. The essays provide

teachers with the information to foster this value in their students.

Educators Adams, Pardo, and Schniedewind (1991/1992) also prioritize faculty multicultural instruction. They recognize the need for teachers to analyze their own cultural habits, values, and beliefs and to acknowledge the validity of disparate cultural dynamics. These authors describe a program at Shoreham-Wading River School District (mainly comprised of white, middle class students) where staff development and instructional activities focus on developing an appreciation for cultural diversity and learning to respond positively to differences in race, ethnicity, social class, gender, religion, physical ability, and sexual orientation. Educators involved in the program describe three stages of cultural awareness through which participants move: "the normative nature of culture stage" during which teachers are sensitized to the dynamics of their own cultural affiliation and confronted with the notion that theirs is not the only "right way;" "the critical awareness stage" during which teachers are challenged to examine the process by which the dominant culture maintains its position of power and the subsequent consequences; "the things can be different stage" during which teachers and faculty strive to effect change and evaluate the results of their efforts. In summary the authors also note an overall growth in faculty social responsibility and personal development.

Sociologists identify solutions that will provide students with the knowledge and appreciation required for confident and responsible global citizenship. In other words, according to Crabtree (1989), students will be called upon to interact with a multicultural world. He admonishes educators that adding new courses will not develop cultural appreciation in students; instead a new world view is required in which Americans believe that all parts of the world affect their own well being. In particular,

Conrad and Hedin (1987), The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship (1988), and Lambert (1992) describe programs that provide students with opportunities to participate in a political or social life larger than the microcosm of their own high school.

Conrad and Hedin (1987) describe school programs that offer students opportunities to participate in the community in a variety of roles that complement present curricula. These interactive activities bring life and relevance to traditional book learning and redefine citizenship to mean more than getting to class on time and not chewing gum. By contributing to the community students feel productive, their self esteem develops, and they become more confident to share. Specifically, the authors suggest that students in English class could write stories for and read to Head Start children. Other ideas would be to publish a booklet of creative writing for nursing home residents or read to the visually impaired.

The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship (1988) reports that several states have addressed the issue of global citizenship in their curriculum development and graduation requirements. Vermont schools require that students complete a citizenship project to graduate from high school. In Springfield, MA every student participates in a community service project integrated with the curriculum. In Washington, DC one high school requires seventy hours of service during four years of high school. In Maryland service projects are offered as electives. In some NY schools seniors are required to complete a service oriented practicum.

Lambert (1992) describes a national project appropriate for student participation that complements the history curriculum and nurtures multicultural understanding and appreciation. In this program students can study and assist Congress in determining if the Selma to Montgomery civil

rights march should become a National Historic Trail, and if so, how best this would be accomplished.

It is the writer's experience that students who have been provided with opportunities to be responsive and productive develop a self regard that then facilitates their more positive interaction with others. They become more willing to reach out to others; oftentimes that first "other" is the teacher herself or a struggling student. But students first have to understand that they themselves have strengths that are of value to their community.

In addition, students integrate book knowledge when it is viewed as relevant to their personal lives. What they learn must seem useful, with a concrete purpose. This is especially true of students who are less motivated by parents and peers to achieve in school merely for the sake of achieving.

Numerous educators defy the predominant white, Western European , male canon and call for its reformation. They feel that through literature students are taught values, and in this case the values of a culture that conquered, enslaved, and discredited native people. Valentine (1989), Cook (1985), Shapiro (1982), and Stotsky (1991/1992) call for a reconstruction of the canon to include relevant, multicultural literature. Valentine notes that multicultural fiction, developmentally appropriate for adolescents, should be included in the curriculum so that students of a dominant culture will have a more vivid and realistic world view and work toward a more equitable cultural response to minority voices. Cook identifies the "black experience" as important to American history as the rise of the working class and requests it be given its rightful place in the curriculum. Shapiro calls for anthologies to discard their disingenuous ethnic quota systems and to recognize the worth of minority writers. For American literature studies Shapiro challenges teachers and text book publishers to abandon the

focal point of the white middle class male with all others as mere offspring of the dominating source. Stotsky's surveys of anthologies show that there is a slow shift to include more voices. However, she supports Shapiro's discrediting of a quota system and identifies four criteria for consideration when selecting among minority works: intellectual content, moral content, civic content, and aesthetic content.

English teachers in the writer's setting regularly abandon token selections in anthologies for better quality pieces that preserve the integrity of the ethnic or racial group. To make choices in this light, one must acknowledge the validity of the voice and the quality of the writing, not just search for a selection to fill a cultural hole. The process also requires extensive reading, in depth knowledge of the culture, and thoughtful consideration.

Hilliard (1991/1992) challenges educators to develop politically correct curriculum suitable for a democratic society. He says, "Ultimately, if the curriculum is centered in truth, it will be pluralistic, for the simple fact is that human culture is the product of the struggles of all humanity, not the possession of a single racial or ethnic group" (p. 13).

Many educators have developed programs that follow the thinking of Hilliard. Smagorinsky (1990) legitimizes literature for students as well as challenging them to develop a sense of community by paralleling literature studies with current events. Renner and Carter (1991) enrich the literature curriculum by lacing it with a study of folklore which houses the stories, songs, jokes,riddles, and proverbs of a culture. Swift (1980) explains an English curriculum designed to connect students to all parts of the globe by guiding them through three levels of instruction: the deep past, the large present, and the future. Hoeveler (1990) details a Native American literature curriculum that analyzes stereotypes, survival, and traditions.

Austin's (1988) report describes a curriculum she developed to encourage and guide students to understand the contributions made by minority cultures and the universality of human need they reflect. Reissman (1991/1992) recommends a program that examines the media coverage of ethnic groups. Gross and Juefei (1991/1992) record the successes of the China Project, an instructional program in rural Vermont which immerses members in Chinese culture. Proponents of a richly diverse curricula recognize that multicultural awareness paradoxically draws students together while it celebrates their individuality.

Programs that complement the literature selections will be the keys to validating a racial or ethnic experience to students. A mere exposure to minority literature will fall short of its intent without carefully designed activities that foster understanding and appreciation.

School wide activities will also serve to further validate classroom activities just as community activities mentioned earlier do. Crabtree (1989) and Jefferson (1989) suggest reading clubs to develop multicultural awareness and appreciation in students and faculty. Crabtree's faculty program calls for reader immersion in the culture. She suggests a study of history, religion, mythology, and traditions to enrich the reading and discussing of various literary works rooted in a particular culture. Jefferson is a librarian and scoffs at educators' reliance on "outside knowledge sources" (p. 22). She, along with Hooks (1989), concur that cultural competence is the foremost criteria for literature selection. Her student reading club focuses on literature that is first hand and representative of a genuine cultural voice, not an interpreter. Both proponents of reading clubs discuss the positive impact of cultural appreciation on their readers.

In the writer's setting reading clubs are encouraged and supported by

school librarians who are frequently in search of a new theme to revitalize extra curricular reading by students and teachers. Such clubs also serve as a catalyst to diversify the library collection, in addition to providing ethnic validation outside the classroom.

A multicultural program that encourages students to read, to study, and to relate in person to a myriad of people will be effective but will not be comprehensive in its design. It ignores the potential impact of the approaching 21st century and the financial and logistical ease with which it may find its place in public education. Telecomputing provides students with the opportunity to get to know distant people in a more personal way than any book or movie or letter can usually afford.

Holvig (1989) recommends telecommunications to diversify the students' cultural experience. He describes a program he directs at an urban high school in Seattle, WA. to develop multicultural appreciation. His students participate in a computer network (Breadnet) designed by Bread Loaf School of English to link students throughout the United States in an electronic exchange of ideas, beliefs, and understanding. His students have exchanged creative and expository pieces with elementary students in their own community, Navaho students in New Mexico, and high school students in rural Minnesota. He notes that students discover, appreciate, and value the unique voices that travel along the phone lines to and from their computer screens. They regard their new audiences with respect and interest and have consequently expanded their cultural knowledge, improved their communication skills, and developed a fuller, more confident voice of their own. In the article Holvig includes a practical design for student networking that operates on a nine week schedule. It includes the following topics: interviews, personal narratives and letters, community essays, oral histories, and visual supplements. Woven amidst

these activities are opportunities for students to provide and receive feedback, to revise, and to edit. To fully reap the benefits of telecomputing Holvig stresses the importance of advance planning, meticulous organization, and strict adherence to realistic deadlines. In summary Holvig states: "This electronic curriculum shrinks the nation, bringing its very fabric into the classroom where it may be stretched and tailored to fit" (p. 70). The writer has considered other ideas that might contribute to multicultural awareness and appreciation. Activities directly involving students are as follows: Students could conduct a school wide campaign to encourage student participation in volunteer programs. These students could also develop and participate in a spring time celebration of self. In addition, students could write an autobiography and prepare a class time capsule as a reflection of knowledge gleaned about one another from the autobiographical sketches. They could also publish a newsletter that would review and recommend movies, television programs, and books that deal with ethnic groups. Finally, students could participate in The Great Mail Race. As an educator the writer could recommend the purchase of new literature anthologies. She could develop a program to encourage and assist faculty members to develop multicultural appreciation and awareness. The writer could also develop and advise a student book club. Finally, the writer could provide students with the following opportunities: to sponsor an international child, to participate in an Academy One intergenerational electronic exchange on the Internet, and to attend a performance of non-European epics by a professional storyteller.

Description of Selected Solution

The writer was prepared to challenge herself, her peers, her students and the general school population to become more knowledgeable and appreciative of many cultures. Also, she would need to expand her own knowledge of ethnic groups, their history, traditions, values, and contemporary social context. To broaden faculty understanding of ethnicity and to make subsequent library purchase requests, she would develop a professional reading club . The writer would develop a curriculum that would responsibly represent ethnic groups in a relevant format that would enrich and legitimize the students' own cultural voices. For these students she would design activities that would provide opportunities for interaction with other cultural groups and for action on behalf of others. The writer, in team with her classroom students, would create programs that would encourage the larger student population to become more socially responsible and subsequently more appreciative and knowledgeable.

The project would be effective for four reasons. The writer believed that the very uniqueness that separated human beings made them members of a universal community that shared feelings of joy, fulfillment, challenge, affiliation, disappointment, despair, and hope. The writer had available to her the necessary resources and training programs. The related literature legitimized the changes planned by the writer. From her teaching experience the writer knew that students who felt fulfilled and validated would be motivated to participate positively in instructional activities.

Report of Action Taken

Prior to implementation the writer attended to several tasks and participated in various enrichment activities that directly shaped the course of the project. Thorough preparation before the opening of school was essential; once school opens there is no halting its pace or altering its path. The system is cumbersome and treats demands for change in a most unfriendly way.

First the proposal was shared with the English department chairperson and the curriculum advisor both of whom heartily approved of the program's intent and focus. As a result the writer received unqualified administrative permission to facilitate the department's selection and purchase of a new, more equitable and relevant anthology.

Using this new anthology (whose content was multiculturally rich and thematic approach relevant to student life) as the core text, the writer began to develop units of study that would support the goals of the practicum. In addition she reviewed literature; requested and accepted input from the social studies department; and generated ideas of her own to develop a program of study for tenth grade non-academic students that would meet curriculum requirements, encourage and guide students to better understand and appreciate their own cultural affiliation and that of others, and help students interact with the larger school community.

The writer also participated in telecommunications training sessions which linked her with educators world wide who were interested in multiculturalism and its effective integration into school curricula. It was immediately apparent that although many educators shared a similar vision of rich cultural diversity celebrated in their classrooms, most had distinctly different reasons for their interest. Some were dealing with racial and/or

ethnic discord in their school settings. Others struggled to diversify their students' limited experience. Still others were overwhelmed by and unprepared for the needs of refugees arriving to their communities and enrolling in their schools. In response to the concerns voiced by teachers during these electronic bulletin board discussions of multiculturalism issues, teachers reached across the telephone lines to offer support and expertise to one another. Many of these electronic links later expanded to include the students of participating teachers.

With the aid of the reading instructor, the writer also enrolled her classes in the AT&T Electronic Learning Network and arranged for the necessary summer electronic work to be completed, arriving back in school in plenty of time to practice using the equipment and to uncover unexpected glitches in the system. Students and teachers are quick to abandon new ideas if they are immediately confronted with frustration when they first venture into a new field. The writer wanted to try to avoid this kind of immediate setback. She did not want to have to spend time cajoling students to be more patient, to trust that tomorrow would be better. It was important that the computer system delivered, on demand, the first day; and it did.

The writer was fortunate to have been afforded many other rich opportunities for professional development prior to implementation than she had anticipated. She was able to attend two multicultural awareness conferences, listen to speeches and participate in presentations by authors to be studied in class, and travel to the Southwest where she interviewed native people.

Concurrent to all of the pre - implementation activities, the writer continued her review of the literature, and as seems to be the habit of most English teachers, her immersion in multicultural fiction selections. In

other words she read and read, and still read and faithfully kept a literature response journal which she would regularly refer to when making plans, evaluating materials, and responding to students.

With regards to the implementation schedule, there were several changes - deliberate, unplanned, and unavoidable - that need reporting and explanation. Despite the amount of thorough pre - planning invested in any program of study, there are always variables that cannot necessarily be controlled or anticipated, the most obvious being the student population.

Because many students' pre-school postcards were returned by the post office, the writer was immediately confronted with a piece of the puzzle she had previously overlooked and would have to deal with throughout the project, finally considering it in the evaluation process - an apparent transcience among her students. Their school attendance was not only erratic but rife with conflict and complication. Their personal lives outside of school regularly obstructed their ability and motivation to focus on lesson content and to participate in classroom activities.

It should also be noted that opportunities on the Internet cannot (with any reliability) be anticipated, counted on, or for that matter, imagined. The Internet, apart from some seasoned projects, is alive and emergent, without calendars, objectives, goals. Consequently, linking with a school for whom her students could provide some service became a frustrating task that never materialized into anything practical. As an alternative, the writer tried to arrange for the group to participate in Amnesty International's Sister City project, but conflicting schedules prevented this from happening. The writer was also unable to electronically connect with senior citizens to implement an intergenerational exchange. Instead, students interviewed relatives or elderly friends to learn about holiday festivities and stories that were traditions in their homes. They

subsequently used the data collected in an electronic holiday exchange with students nation wide.

Because the class did not share resources with a school in need, it was unable to report it to the PTA newsletter as planned. However, it did report its feelings about diversity in the form of news articles that were published in the local paper. It is important to note that students were less uncomfortable with community visibility than school visibility. Not wanting to draw so much attention to themselves, students axed the time capsule idea and withdrew from the Celebration of Self Day.

The Celebration of Self Day was postponed until late March because Amnesty International, Student Council, the State Department of Education, and numerous departments within the school wanted to contribute. The students, regretfully, became lost in the breadth of the planning process itself. It was no longer their project, but the school's. Feeling regularly alienated by the school's social structure and intimidated by the depersonalized nature of its large group activities as they often do, these students quietly refused to participate. Understanding their position and careful to preserve the integrity of the practicum's focus, the teacher presented no contest on the issue.

Implementation Schedule

1. Week 1: August 17-21, 1992 -- Prepared for faculty reading club.
   a. The writer prepared and sent a mailing to faculty members explaining the multicultural reading club and inviting all to participate by attending a planning session on August

27, 1992 (teacher workshop day).

b. The writer compiled and distributed pertinent data gleaned from the literature to share with interested faculty members regarding student and faculty multicultural awareness.

2. Week 2: August 24-28 -- Completed preliminary tasks for the AT&T Mind Works network project.

a. The writer conducted an orientation session for writing center staff to acquaint them with the goals, process, and schedule associated with linking learning circles that would cooperatively produce a creative writing journal.

b. The writer gathered, compiled, and submitted to AT&T demographic information needed to group schools into culturally and geographically diverse learning circles.

c. The writer met with the electronics team to test the telecommunications equipment and system.

3. Week 3: August 31 - September 4 --

Communicated with students prior to the opening of school.

a. The writer sent each student a postcard to personalize herself to the student.

b. The writer invited students to bring something of theirs to personalize the classroom, such as: posters, stuffed animals, and mobiles.

c. The writer invited students to stop by on workshop day to say, "Hi." and to help decorate the classroom -- their classroom.

4. Week 4: September 8-11 -- Facilitated opening school activities.

a. The writer held the first meeting of the reading club during which the group would decide on a focal culture, choose rotating facilitators, schedule future meetings, and determine program content.

b. The students introduced themselves to other members of the learning circle.

5. Weeks 5-14: September 14 - November 20 -- Facilitated student participation in identity unit which is guided by the following questions: What and who shapes your life? What are your needs? How would you like your family, school, and community members to support you?

a. The writer assisted students in planning the learning circle cooperative project.

b. Students created and shared experience portfolios.

c. Students interviewed grandparents to complete an intergenerational exchange of traditional celebration narratives.

d. Following a review of research skills, students completed a genealogical and local geographical roots search.

e. Using the writing process and information gleaned from the roots search, students created myths to depict the local, historical past; narratives to depict the present; and science fiction to depict the future.

f. Students submitted portions

of the above material to learning circle members for feedback and revision suggestions.

g. Students bound their creative writing.

h. The class helped to plan a Celebration of Self Day.

i. In class students painted a mural of individual student profiles designed by the students.

j. The writer, through a series of critical thinking exercises, guided students in an analysis of their cultural values.

k. Students prepared news articles for the local paper that were the result of their participation in the identity unit and the important discoveries experienced by them.

6. Week 15: November 23-25 -- Implemented transition activity -- the oral tradition.

a. Students heard a professional storyteller relate non - European epics.

b. Students shared their

favorite stories with each other.

7. Weeks 16-17: November 30 - December 11 -- Closed the learning circle.
   a. The writer guided students through an analysis of the value system behind the writing of student members of the learning circle.
   b. Students desktop published the Mind Works Creative Writing Journal.
   c. Students distributed the journal.
8. Weeks 18-27: December 14 -- February 19 -- Facilitated student participation in multicultural literature study designed to focus on the values, the history, and the needs of various ethnic groups and to validate their literary voices.
   a. Students began the study with a review of their own values, shapers, and needs.
   b. The writer planned instructional activities to assist students in brainstorming the values, shapers, and needs of other cultural groups about whom they hold some common knowledge.
   c. Following presentations by

youth and adult volunteers, students selected a local or national human service organization with which they would become involved and about which they would keep journal records.

d. The class conducted a program to encourage student body participation in human service.

f. The writer implemented a unit of study designed to explore media (including cinema) coverage of minority groups.

g. The writer facilitated a study of multi-ethnic literature which would give students the opportunity to hear individuals speak for themselves.

h. Each student completed an independent study of a literature selection written by an author of non-European descent.

i. In a comparative chart students synthesized how students used to view ethnic groups, how the media and cinema depicts ethnic groups, and how the literature voices the realities of ethnic groups.

j. The class shared its findings

with the larger school community (including an electronic Internet group) in a newsletter of movie and book reviews.

9. Weeks 28-30: March 1-19 -- Guided students through a program designed to develop an awareness of social services.

a. Students reviewed the needs expressed by themselves, those they worked with in a voluntary capacity, and the literary figures they had heard.

b. Students researched local services to see if these needs are met in their own community.

c. Needs not addressed by local programs were the topic of discussion and research to determine local service deficiencies or the need for change on a larger scale.

d. Social studies teachers explained the political process of implementing change and reform.

e. Each student took some form of action that would address the identified deficiencies.

10. Week 31: March 22-26 -- Began to disseminate practicum results.
    a. The writer shared this practicum with the book club members.
    b. The writer shared this practicum with the K-12 language arts team.
    c. The writer shared this practicum with the NH State Department of Education Equity Office.
    d. The writer shared this practicum with the English Department at her school.
    e. The writer shared this practicum with the district technology team.
    f. The writer shared this practicum with the MacMillian Publishing Company.
    g. The writer shared this practicum with the University of NH technology department.
11. Week 32: March 28-April 2 -- Evaluated the implementation period and continued dissemination.
    a. The writer monitored the completion of the student questionnaire and compared the responses to those expressed by students prior to the implementation period.
    b. The writer planned for her classes to be observed by the social studies teachers and to conference with them.

c. The writer reviewed her journal.

d. The writer consulted her records to determine how many students participated in a volunteer experience.

e. The writer conferenced with the social studies teacher to discuss possible changes in multicultural awareness exhibited by students.

f. The writer arranged for the counselor to conduct exit volunteerism interviews and to conference with the writer.

CHAPTER V

Results, Discussion, and Recommendations

Results

Tenth grade students in non-academic English classes exposed to multiculturalism tenaciously clung to a group posture that manifested itself in stubborn indifference. Their apathetic response to the pain of others, perceived as "different" from themselves, coupled with their quick rejection of divergent cultural values and practices, regularly aborted curriculum objectives and discouraged the teacher.

A cursory consideration of the situation might mislead an observer into thinking that these students had been toughened by the system and were consequently too numb to empathize with others or that they harbored irrational fears about strangers. However, the writer's out of class observation of the students immediately challenged these unsubstantiated explanations. These were individuals who cried compassionately with their peers and joined fearlessly, with a feverish loyalty and without consideration of possible repercussions, the rebellions of their peers. A closer look at this student group also revealed that the group's composition was far more culturally heterogeneous than other groups. The writer looked beyond the personalities of her students to the larger picture - the educational context. It would require an overhaul, not confined to the classroom or curriculum. The school community as well as the individual students needed to develop an appreciation and understanding of cultures, including their own.

The total number of participants in the project was below that anticipated in the proposal stages. Class assignments and numbers of

sections needed to meet changing enrollments altered the writer's own teaching assignment. Beginning with 26 students in the fall, the number fluctuated weekly because of a variety of reasons beyond the control of the writer: pregnancy, abuse, truancy, expulsion, employment, court action, health, and child care, to name a few. By the end of the implementation period, the number of students in actual regular attendance had shrunk to 18. However, these 18 students had participated in the program from its beginning. Although class enrollment had gone up and down throughout these months, those who joined the class in midstream did not remain through the program's completion and evaluation. The outcomes have been appropriately modified to reflect this drop in the number of participants.

1. The writer expected completed exit questionnaires to indicate that of 18 tenth grade (non-academic tracked) students, 4 would indicate they were unaware of their own ethnic roots, 4 would hold no knowledge of any ethnic group beyond superficial stereotypes, 12 would know someone from another ethnic group, 11 would think it was enriching to know someone from another cultural group, and 14 would remember a character in literature whose ethnicity was other than their own.

Questionnaire responses indicated that 2 students were unaware of their own ethnic roots (one claiming he had come from nowhere, no family that he wanted to be reminded of, and one claiming she had forgotten - it was some name she could not spell, anyway). Four held no knowledge of any ethnic group beyond superficial stereotypes, 2 did not know someone from another ethnic group (one of whom claimed to not know anyone at a school he regretted having to attend), 11 thought it would be enriching to know someone from another cultural group, and 17 remembered a character in literature whose ethnicity was other than their own.

2. The writer expected that in classroom activities observed by the writer and three social studies teachers on 5 different occasions 14 of the 18 students would respond on a leichert scale to "having concrete plans to respond" to the crises of persons in the media and in literature.

14 students did respond with an indication of initiative. It was viewed by observers to be positive if the student's response was going to be to discuss the situation or information with others. In other words, if the experience became part of the student, observers considered it a positive response.

3. The writer expected her journal entries to describe genuine class interest in literature which was authored by and/or focused on another cultural group.

In actuality the writer's journal was crammed with information. Because the students' concerns and questions were often unanticipated, they needed recording so that they could be addressed at a later time. Many served as the roots to spin-off projects of which there were at times too many.

The most significant comment made by any student was, "How come I never knew this before?" Some students read ahead in their new anthologies and engaged in genuine arguments with their classmates that reflected their personal involvement with the literary characters. They could see much of themselves in these characters. Responses to less traditional requests that might challenge the student's integrity beyond mere discussion contributions were often communicated shyly, in a whisper, to the writer. "I think I can come up with some cans of soup for the kitchen." Because this group often scorns those who cooperate with teachers, this very private kind of response was noted with satisfaction.

4. The writer expected that when interviewed by the writer and a guidance counselor 12 of 18 students would be familiar with community service projects and 11 would indicate they had made an effort to participate at some level.

An unplanned series of workshops on domestic violence offered by the student group P.I.E.R. was most effective in encouraging student involvement. Many students participated in an acting out workshop that gave them the opportunity to "try out" a response that would directly involve them in a situation requiring action. The workshops also provided them with more local resources.

16 students interviewed were familiar with community service projects (The writer's room had become a bulletin board of possibilities as other school groups heard of the class's focus.), and 13 indicated they had made an effort to participate at some level. Participation was as individual as the students themselves. Students brought in sheet rock buckets for winter sand supplies, donated money to fire victims, wrote action letters, made posters to support school service projects, distributed and emptied recycling bins, and helped with a blood drawing. Other students became more personally involved by accompanying another student to AA meetings and helping out at the local humane society. Although no effort was particularly newsworthy, to each student the effort was personal and genuine which mattered more to the writer and required a public connection beyond the safety net of the neighborhood or peer group.

In addition to the observed student response, the evaluation process gave the writer and the counselor an opportunity to make further plans to work together with this group of students, specifically to develop in them the skills and awareness to make career choices and develop appropriate goals. This program stemmed from the students' experiences with local

service agencies and branched out to include shadowing experiences with local lawyers, bankers, disc jockeys, fish and game officers, veterinarians, and golf course supervisors, to name only a few. The program is now in the process of being considered by all English teachers of sophomores as a required three week unit of study to be team taught by the career counselor and the English teacher.

Discussion

The writer has determined that expected outcomes were reached. Non-academic tenth grade students did develop an understanding and appreciation for cultural differences. By participating in both school and class programs, students became more involved with and knowledgeable of the values and experiences of those whose roots were different from their own. In addition, they demonstrated a willingness and intention to respond to the crises of a culturally diverse group outside of their immediate circle of friends. However, it is not enough to determine that students did develop certain attitudes and values during the course of the project. The essence lies within the answer to the question: "Why?" What changes in the educational context are most responsible for the positive changes and should be considered as effective pedagogical practice?

The writer's preparation for implementation is a significant factor to consider when discussing the results of the project. Her engagement with multiculturalism was not only comprehensive and intense but pregnant with meaningful substance. Once the new textbook arrived, the writer began her immersion in the literature. Its honesty and richness consumed and thrilled her. The anthology also provided titles for enrichment reading which the writer added to a growing list of selections she intended to read,

some of which would be assigned and/or recommended to students. Applebee (1992) reports that the top ten titles studied in literature classes across the nation include only one woman (Harper Lee) and no authors by minority writers. When alternative texts are considered, there is little shift, only a larger selection of titles. Of 11,579 selections 81% are authored by males, 98% of whom are white (non-Hispanic). When compared to previous studies, these findings show that little has changed in the last decade despite considerable efforts to redefine or challenge the canon (Applebee, 1992).

The writer's engagement with the new text provided her with only a taste of what lay ahead. Local authors appeared on the local college's calendar: Allende, Dorris, and Tan. Conferences featured multiculturalism as their theme and featured other authors as their guest speakers such as Nicholassa Mohr who inspired participants with rich anecdotes and poignant readings. The writer's initial wanderings through the maze of the Internet introduced her to an enormous network of concerned educators on EDNET. Venturing further she became an active participant of KIDSNET which focuses more on activities than discussion. The possibilities seemed overwhelming, but accessible. The difficulty lay in making choices, not in participating. As the writer's research continued, she was introduced to a new journal Teaching Tolerance created specifically to deal with issues of individual difference. Finally, the writer traveled to New Mexico where she found herself in the heart of Native American history, condition, celebration, and literature. Native people were eager to discuss issues of intolerance and recommend genuine Native American literature, but the landscape, itself, previously only imagined through the printed word, gave life to much of what the writer had read; a new more personal connection had been made.

"Literature is one of the most humanistic endeavors which has been used to reflect back to readers their own images." (19)

Because the book's selections were diverse in authorship, it also provided students with rich models of genuine humanity. Anaya (1992) points out that book publishers have for too long presented what he calls a "narrow and paternalistic" view of the United States; instead, he notes, it is "multidimensional" and instructional materials should reflect this national characteristic. Author Cisneros (Klein, 1992) calls her youth "impoverished" because it lacked rich literature.

And finally, although unmeasured and not previously identified as an expected outcome, student interest was more acute and their grades higher than usual. Author Walter (1992) would not be surprised. She says, "Difference is the spice that brings the taste of excitement to life. How dreary life would be if there was no color in our world; if everything were the same size and shape." (31)

However, this multicultural study of literature is not only one of excitement and adventure. It challenges readers to confront the realities of prejudice and bigotry, to acknowledge that despite its richness, diversity challenges insecurities and fears, those that are latent and pronounced, founded and unfounded. The one openly racist student in the class finally shared with the group that he had been robbed and beaten by a black gang in Denver. And that was precisely why his family had moved to this area, to live among people who looked the same as they did. To them this guaranteed their safety. A more personal diverse approach to literature study, then, provided this boy with the opportunity to share and examine a side of himself he had previously felt compelled to hide under a cloud of detached indifference. Narahashi (1992) speaks of this kind of alienation individuals experience as they grow up. She notes that as you grow up,

people around you seem only to know parts of you, but few, if any, know your whole story. Often curriculum design reinforces this fragmentation. This anthology, instead, sought to explore that whole story of each individual and provided the writer with the most important tool in achieving positive results from the project. The anthology's global view of the planet and its assigned indisputable value to the daily lives of all of its inhabitants served to shift the focus of students (called for by Crabtree (1989) needed to create a positive atmosphere for multicultural understanding and appreciation.

The students' participation in the electronic learning circle also served to develop positive attitudes about themselves and others. It established the essential "real" human connection identified by Bullard (1991/1992) as the most important ingredient in a homogeneous population such as this one. Initially students boasted to their distant connections and kept conversations safe. They described their height and hair and identified their favorite music groups. They discovered that their correspondents responded likewise, safely. Then students found themselves confronted with the values expressed in the study of mythology. Take Odysseus, for instance; they commented on his self centered selfishness and racist point of view. He was, of course, handsome and rich and promiscuous, deserving privilege as the leader of men of seeming little consequence. "Did other cultures draw their values from a similar type of hero?" they wondered. Their discoveries served to provide more meaningful substance to their electronic exchanges, especially with students from the previous East Germany and Finland, both of which are presently struggling with issues of immigration, diversity, and intolerance. The real life connections of these student with Somalian refugees in Finland and raging Neo-Nazi skin heads in Germany struck the core of students who became much more willing to

search where hatred comes from and how to deal with the fear that diversity feeds. The success of this electronic exchange led to a proposal to include telecommunications and desk top publishing instruction as part of a required computer literacy course in the planning stages.

Reflection on responses to the Cultural Awareness assessment tool and the volunteerism interview paints vivid and often precise pictures of the students involved in the project. One characteristic strikes the reader immediately - honesty and confidence. Students knew they had thought about these kinds of things throughout the year and had processed them in numerous ways so that they had formulated clear thoughts which they were eager and able to articulate.

The evaluation process also represented a learning experience in its own right for the students as well as the teachers and counselors involved. Questions asked in the assessment tools sparked healthy discussions and troubling responses from individuals to the class as a whole. One student announced to the class that it was about time they knew that she was being regularly and seriously threatened because she was dating a black boy. She asked for their help to avoid physical confrontations she knew would only heighten the suffering and animosity. She also complained that in her small town where there were no blacks nobody ever talked about problems like this. She unwisely had assumed that her class mates and neighbors would be tolerant. Clark, DeWolf, and Clark (1992) note that many who grow up in middle white America lack the coping skills needed for living in a heterogeneous world because such skills are not needed in their homogeneous environments. Another student complained to the class that it was not his peers that stereotyped, but his parents; and he was the victim of their bias. He felt angry and paralyzed by their narrow view of his potential as a child of theirs.

Individual, written responses were also revealing. Students who had previously scoffed at the possibility of learning another language now boasted that they, of course, knew several. Their use of the word "knew" might be somewhat misleading. For instance, they "knew" Swahili because they could say with easy and understanding: "Hakuna matata." (no problem). However, the shift in attitude is meaningful. On a more serious note, their response to why people hurt one another without even knowing one another was overwhelmingly consistent: "because they are afraid." The group rationale had shifted from one of aggression and power to fear and insecurity, from strong to weak. It was no longer the tough guy who discriminated; now it was the uninformed, misinformed, and inexperienced. Students consistently took pride in the fact that they had helped a stranger and attributed their desire to help others to the fact that they themselves, when pressed to think about it, had often been in need of help. These strangers who benefitted from their gestures were no longer shunned misfits but members of the community as they as students were. The most disturbing and, at first reading, discouraging response was to the final question that asks if students would like to know someone from another cultural group. "I don't get along too well with blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and gays because I don't know how to act around them. I don't think they're very right in my world. (Maybe I am wrong.) I am stubborn sometimes and don't like to listen." But this student had been listening. He had begun to consider why he felt as he did to those whose appearance and values were different from his own and to entertain the possibility that he should change. What lingers is the question: Does he think he can change?

In conclusion, as students exited from this program they did so as changed individuals in varying degrees and distinction. They did not all

necessarily leave soundly committed to or confident in a more informed, equitable, and appreciative view of other cultures, but they had emerged as contemplative citizens with emerging social responsibility. They had mustered the courage to leave their secure, protected status as indifferent students and venture out beyond the television screen to engage with the larger world. And all professed to be genuinely pledged to tolerance. The program had reached past their academic lives to influence their personal lives as well. In a sense their school, work, and leisure time had merged.

This integration of the curriculum into the personal lives of the students was probably the most important result of the program and can be most directly related to what Clark, etc. call a "saturated, culturally diverse curriculum.... [that] keeps a base curriculum of salient similarities and universal needs as the underlying theme... [that] works *with* rather than *against* the child's egocentrism." (42) The thematic approach of the text set an organizational basis of development that placed a personal, relevant focus on all activities. The lives of these students became immersed in multiculturalism as they developed an awareness and sensitivity to what was happening beyond their county. Having daily newspapers available for students helped to develop in them a social conscience. (This was introduced by the writer after many students reported on the questionaire that they never read or watched the news.) Discussions of other cultures did not focus on the remote, detached past. Students and teachers regularly brought in news of relevant cultural events being celebrated, such as: the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Rigoberta Menchu, an author studied by the students, a critical viewing of the play "Fires in the Mirror," and the reading and writing of the inaugural poem by Maya Angelou, an author treasured by many of the students. Nor did the project emphasize the concrete elements of cultural difference, such as: clothing, shelter, and

physical stature. The individuals in each cultural group came first as did the individuals in the class. From there, group affiliation was examined and studied. Students were also encouraged to engage in classroom simulations beginning with a particularly powerful exercise in gender reversal that effectively taught the basic concepts of stereotype, bias, discrimination, prejudice, equity, and voice, terms that joined the vernacular, replacing, instead, words that often reinforced widely held stereotypes and prejudice. English teachers often measure success by language use because it is distinctly one's own and the primary vehicle for imposing one's beliefs and celebrating one's identity.

Recommendations

1. The teacher should avail herself of all possible opportunities to communicate with people, all people. In a sense she should allow herself to be bombarded by the rich diversity of individuality.
2. The teacher should make every attempt to attend multicultural events.
3. Traveling (not on a tour held as a hostage in a sterile resort designed to insulate its guests from the native population) provides what little else can, the people and the context, the more complete picture and more of what the students need to be exposed to.
4. The teacher should carefully examine and evaluate the curriculum materials and weigh the value of having an anthology that she is not only comfortable with but also delighted with. The teacher's feeling toward the anthology are not easily hidden and the content of it drives the instruction.
5. Keeping a journal is essential to remind and sensitize the teacher to the subtleties that occur as a result of group dynamics and to use it for self validation and problem solving.

6. Informally sharing teaching experiences serves as a catalyst for furthering the solution within the teacher's assigned classes, department, and district and feeding her enthusiasm.
7. The teacher must be prepared to deal with anger, hatred, fear, and confusion.

Dissemination

The faculty reading group became the first group of professionals with whom the writer shared her practicum. Their enthusiasm and genuine interest encouraged the writer to make arrangements to disseminate the project's content and results to a larger group of professionals, the K-12 Language Arts Curriculum Team. At this meeting the NH State Department of Education Equity Office attended and contributed, offering workshops, instructional materials, and consultations which were requested by many at all levels of instruction. With the English department the writer shared the results and particularly recommended adoption of the anthology which was heartily approved. The department would later prepare to propose adoption at other levels. The telecommunications piece of the project was the featured instructional booth at a technology workshop offered to district employees. The writer was asked to share the results with and join the district technology team who has also requested she serve on a committee to develop a revised computer literacy course. The publisher of the anthology has requested and received the results of the project, specifically as it relates to the book's content and approach. The University of NH in its computer journal has reported and commended the program. And finally, the writer has been granted a leave of absence to

further study multicultural education, develop curriculum, and publish her findings.

References

Abalos, D. (1989). Multicultural education in the service of transformation. Proceedings of the Conference on Celebrating Diversity: A Global Approach to Literature and World Culture (pp. 7-10) Montclair, NJ: Montclair State College.

Adams, B. S., Pardo, W., & Schniedewind, N. (1991/1992). Changing "the way things are done around here." Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 37-42.

Anaya, R. (1992). The censorship of neglect. English Journal, 81 (5), 18-20.

Applebee, A. (1992). Stability and change in the high school curriculum. English Journal, 81 (5), 27-32.

Austin, K. (1980). Incorporating the multicultural, nonsexist guidelines into the language arts curriculum. Grades 9-12 (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 241 926).

Banks, J.A. (1991/1992). Multicultural education: For freedom's sake. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 32-35.

Bullard, S. (1991/1992). Shifting sands. Teaching Tolerance, 1 (1), 38-45.

Cameron, A. (1992). Ann Cameron. School Library Journal, 38 29-30.

Clark, L., DeWolf, S., & Clark, C. (1992). Helping teachers avoid having culturally assaultive classrooms. Young Children, 47 (7), 4-9.

Coles, R. (1986). The moral life of children. New York: Atlantic Monthly Press.

Conrad, D., & Hedin, D. (1987). Youth service -- A guidebook for developing and operating effective programs. Independent Sector.

Cook, W.W. (1985). The Afro-American Griot. In C. Brooks (Ed.), Tapping Potential: English and Language Arts for the Black Learner (pp. 22-28). Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Crabtree, L. (1989). Reshaping the American worldview: World studies in the schools. Proceedings of the Conference on Celebrating Diversity: A Global Approach to Literature and World Culture (pp. 10-19) Montclair, NJ: Montclair State College.Gross, S., &

Helms, B. (1992). Rediscovering America through literature. English Journal, 81 (5), 17.

Hilliard, A. (1991/1992). Why we must pluralize the curriculum. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 12-13.

Hoeveler, D. (1990). Text and context: Teaching Native American literature. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 326 880).

Holvig, K. (1989). Jamming the phone lines: Pencils, notebooks, and modems. English Journal, 78 (8), 68-70.

Hooks, B. (1989). Talking back. Boston, MA: South End Press.

Jefferson, E.B. (1989). Proceedings of the Conference on Celebrating Diversity: A Global Approach to Literature and World Culture (pp. 20-22) Montclair, NJ: Montclair State College.

Juefei, W. (1991/1992). The China project. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 73-78.

Klein, D. (1992). Coming of age in novels by Rudolfo Anaya and Sandra Cisneros. English Journal, 81 (5), 21-26.

Lambert, L. (1992). The Selma to Montgomery March Movement. Teaching Tolerance, 1 (1), 56-57.

Maslow, A. (1968). Toward a psychology of being. New York: D. Van Nostrand Co.

Narahashi, K. (1992). Keiko Narahashi. School Library Journal, 38 30-31.

O'Neil, J. (1991/1992). On the Portland Plan: A conversation with Matthew Prophet. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 24-27.

Ozturk, M. (1991/1992). Education for cross-cultural communication. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 79-81.

Patterson, L. (1982). The role of the teacher in multi-ethnic literature. Illinois English Bulletin, 69 (3), 46-50.

Polakow - Suransky, S., & Ulaby, N. (1990). Students take action to combat racism. Phi Delta Kappan, 71(8), 601-606.

Pool, I., & Iwao, S. (1981). Japanese and US media: Some cross cultural insights into TV violence. Journal of Communication, 31 (2), 28-36.

Reissman, R. (1991/1992). Multicultural awareness collages. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 51-53.

Renner, S.M., & Carter, J.M. (1991). Comprehending text -- Appreciating diversity through folklore. Journal of Reading, 34 (8), 602-604.

Shapiro, M. (1982). Pluralism and literature in America: A plea for the 80's. Illinois English Bulletin, 69 (3), 1-46.

Smagorinsky, P. (1990). Developing the social conscience through literature. In. P. Phelan (Ed.), Literature and Life (pp. 13-18). Urbana, IL: NCTE.

Stotsky, S. (1991/1992). Whose literature? America's! Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 53-54.

Stover, L. (1991). Exploring and celebrating cultural diversity and similarity through young adult novels. ALAN Review, 18 (3), 12-15.

Suzuki, B. (1984). Curriculum transformation for multicultural education. Education and Urban Society, 16 (3), 294-322.

Swift, J. (1980). Global education: Fantasy, reality, and the English class (ED216369). ERIC.

Taylor, H. (1987). Cross cultural communication: An effective dimension of effective education. Washington, DC: American University.

Valentine, M. (1989). Proceedings of the Conference on Celebrating Diversity: A Global Approach to Literature and World Culture (pp. 22-24) Montclair, NJ: Montclair State College.

Walter, M.P. (1992). Mildred Pitts Walter. School Library Journal, 38 31-32.

Weinstein, S. (1992). Across the classroom walls. Teaching Tolerance, 1 (1), 24-27.

Wigginton, E. (1991/1992). Culture begins at home. Educational Leadership, 49 (4), 60-64.

The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship. (1988). The forgotten half: Final Report -- Youth and America's future. Washington, DC.

APPENDIX A

SAMPLE ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENT FOR CULTURAL AWARENESS

Sample Assessment Instrument for Cultural Awareness

I am conducting a survey that will help me improve the tenth grade English curriculum. I appreciate your honest responses.

Please do not include your name.

I also want to make sure that we agree on the definitions of the following terms: ethnic, culture, stereotype. Please consult the board for the Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary definitions.

1. What are your ethnic roots? In other words, to what country does your family trace its ancestors? _____

2. If you had to choose another ethnic group, which one would you choose? _____ Why?_____

3. Have you ever tried to speak a language other than English?_____

4. Have you ever attended a religious or other ethnic celebration that was different from your own? ____ What was it?_____

5. Why do you think people hurt each other when they do not know one another?

_____

6. Can you remember a character in literature you felt connected to?_____ Who?_____ ___

7. List places outside of NH where you have traveled._____

8. List characters in literature you can remember that represented a culture other than your own._____

9. Do you think students at this school stereotype? _____
If yes, give an example._____

10. To what places would you like to travel?_____
_____

11. What image(s) do you have of the people you would encounter there?_____

12. Do you know someone from another cultural group? _____
What cultural group does the person represent?_____

13. If no, do you wish you did?_____

APPENDIX B

VOLUNTEERISM INTERVIEW

Suggested Questions for Volunteerism Interview

1. Do you watch the news on television or read a newspaper?

If yes, what parts interest you most?

2. What do you **think** when you see starving children on television?

3. What do you **do** when you see starving children on television?

4. Have you ever helped a stranger directly or indirectly?
If yes, please explain.

5. Have you ever worked as a volunteer? If yes, in what capacity?

6. How many students at this school do you think volunteer?

7. Do you know any students who volunteer?

8. Why would someone choose to volunteer?

APPENDIX C

BOOK SELECTION CRITERIA

Book Selection Criteria Questions

1. Is the book accurate?
2. Is it well written? Will it hold students' interest?
3. Is it well illustrated?
4. Will it stand the kind of handling likely to be given it by students?
5. Is the type large enough for students to read easily?
6. Does the book "talk down" to students?
7. Is the book either too easy or too difficult for the students?
8. Does the author deal honestly and straightforwardly with controversial topics, or does he evade them?
9. Does the author depict the minority in a realistic manner or does she perpetuate old stereotypes?
10. Is the book comprehensive? Does it cover in sufficient detail the major periods of the minority group experience in America?
11. What are the author's qualifications?